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SEMINAR REPORT

Seminar on a Training Agenda for the Eighties

Center for the Study of Intelligence
Central Intelligence Agency
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Seminar on a Training Agenda for the Eighties

The Director of Training convoked a meeting of representatives of the Office of Training (OTR) and its principal Agency customers in late November for a wide-ranging discussion on the directions and emphases which may characterize Agency training in the next decade. The conference was the first of several scheduled to be held on this subject.

The discussion began with broad consideration of possible training profiles for the 1980s, and then turned to such specifics as analytical, managerial, Intelligence Community, language and individualized training. While no conclusions were reached which could be construed as recommendations for training "policy" in the eighties, a number of strongly-held views were registered by the participants and a productive exchange of ideas was realized. [REDACTED] of the Center for the Study of Intelligence (CSI) served as the informal rapporteur for the session. His summary, amplified and modified by some of the other OTR attendees, follows. Although not reviewed by any of the non-OTR participants, CSI believes the Summary substantially reflects the major points discussed.

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SEMINAR ON A TRAINING AGENDA FOR THE EIGHTIES

On 29 November thirteen Agency representatives, whose components are among the chief participants in Office of Training (OTR) courses, met with a half dozen OTR officers under the auspices of the Center for the Study of Intelligence (CSI) to discuss training needs and requirements for the 1980s. The Director of Training (DTR) [REDACTED] presided over the session. Discussion revolved loosely around a paper distributed to the participants in advance which suggested that four subject matter areas should receive prime emphasis in the eighties: Analyst Training, Language Training, Information Processing and The Terrorist Challenge. The paper, though faulted by some of the discussants for its failure to mention operations training,¹ and by some others for omitting any reference to issues which the Intelligence Community will almost certainly have to face in the next decade, nonetheless proved useful in setting parameters for the meeting.

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Profiles of Training in the Eighties

The DTR opened the session by asking the attendees for their views on how training in the 1980s is likely to differ from the present in terms of demands, emphases and directions. The participants responded with views as to course content, methodology, and the quality of instruction, the proper locus of various training courses, and the role of OTR as a stimulus for change within CIA.

A theme sounded early in the meeting was the need for a "return to basics" in training similar to that taking place in education outside of the Agency. According to this view, changes -- for example, in the S&T area and in information processing -- are accelerating markedly and will continue to do so while, at the same time, the Agency is aging and becoming more "bureaucratic." In these circumstances, training should "resist things that are bureaucratic" and concentrate on those things unique to CIA: our clandestinity

¹The DTR indicated that operations training is a "given" -- an integral part of training for the 1980s -- and that its omission from the discussion paper in no way signals a lessened emphasis by OTR on operations training in the eighties.

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and the integrity of our apolitical product. Training should focus on maintaining and refurbishing these two unique elements of the intelligence business.

Directorate of Operations (DO) representatives were insistent that any "return to basics" include a strong reemphasis on sound tradecraft training to help stem the "permissiveness" exhibited in clandestine operations overseas where too many flaps and compromises have occurred. Another view expressed was that "back to basics" should be combined with a forward thrust in such areas as intelligence analysis and managerial training which have been somewhat neglected as far as the application of resources is concerned. The question was also posed as to whether there should be a return to some form of area studies similar to that which OTR offered until 1965.

One spokesman observed that the matter of what to teach is the most important question to consider in the eighties since change is coming very fast in so many areas. He asserted that the Agency is far behind the curve, for example, in the life sciences area and in artificial intelligence; he suggested that OTR provide training in various courses designed to sensitize senior managers to the needs of the future. Agency management was called upon to determine what it will cost to be "on top" in the 1980s and to begin facing up to those costs now.

Some doubt was expressed that OTR could become a vehicle for substantive training, although it was generally agreed that OTR could help sensitize senior managers at least to be less of an impediment to "futures." There was uncertainty, however, about how much sensitizing should be done by OTR and how much was the responsibility of the affected offices. One discussant asserted that the responsibility for indicating the thrust and importance of various issues clearly belongs to the offices facing those issues. Hence, the affected offices should go out and hire the people necessary to cope with those issues. He listed -- in addition to international terrorism -- religious fervor, various kinds of nationalism and the impact of advanced civilization on backward societies as the most crucial issues with which the Intelligence Community must cope in the next decade. It was noted by another participant that many such issues could be discussed by outside speakers in courses or in the Guest Speaker Program. Additionally, it was agreed that experts from

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within the Agency could be drawn upon to elaborate and explicate these and other issues and to describe what to look for as a way of understanding complex issues.

Considerable discussion ensued over where to draw the line between OTR-conducted training and component-conducted training, and how to cull from current OTR offerings courses which some customers believe are no longer viable. On the first point it was observed that there is nothing either in the regulations or in the "folklore" to help determine where such a line should properly be drawn. Based on the present formula under which OTR conducts the more generalized courses while components offer more specific subjects, (e.g., communications), it was suggested that the line between OTR and component training might be drawn at the point where a perceived need for training transcends individual offices.

On the second point it was noted that any discussion about dropping courses should proceed in the knowledge that each course has value to a particular constituency which creates pressure for retaining that course. It was further observed that OTR already has a mechanism for shaping its course offerings to the desires of its clients. The procedure is carried out yearly in response to requirements levied on the directorates as to the number of people they intend to place in each of the courses OTR will offer the following year. In practice, however, this procedure does not mute the complaints of those components whose favorite courses are candidates for cancellation. This leaves OTR somewhat at the mercy of the components -- a kind of "you-call-we-haul" situation. Two rhetorical questions were asked by OTR representatives. Would the components be willing to give up their more parochial desires? How much support might OTR expect from component managers in the future in the event OTR were to cull a number of courses? A partial response was the suggestion that we adopt the same tactic as was employed in the cancellation of the old NIS program: make the components pay for any courses retained purely at their insistence.

This led into a discussion of the extent to which OTR should act as an "agent of change" -- to "get out in front" and play an active role in moving CIA toward expressed goals, to foresee needs and to address them before they are realized by the directorates, and to cancel courses where OTR perceives there will be a lessening of demand. The

DTR replied that it is, of course, OTR's professional responsibility to look ahead and to anticipate needs, even where these may not be perceived -- and are possibly even opposed -- by managers. He maintained, however, that it is easier to add new courses than to cut out old ones.

The question of what resources are likely to be available for training in the next decade brought widely differing responses from the participants. One attendee insisted that the 1980s will see a "turnaround" in the allocation of resources to CIA, which have been going down steadily since 1966. Several others expressed skepticism that such would be the case. One DO spokesman said, with respect to existing training, that we will have to continue juggling resources, withdrawing and substituting participants in courses at the last minute, and suspending and cancelling courses indefinitely into the future. If new courses are to be added, existing courses will have to be dropped -- unless new resources can somehow be found. He added that the large influx of CTs in the 1980s and the need to train them is already causing great consternation in the DO. In consequence, some managers have advocated eliminating the Military Officers Training Course (MOTC). The DTR said that the chief scarcity is people, and he noted that his office expects to obtain four new positions in 1980 -- which he found remarkable -- small though this may seem. He also said that OTR can and must draw on other resources to get its work done, but even so its mission is still a very large one. The original spokesman on this point interjected to say that trying to get "more with less" may not be a good philosophy as far as future training needs are concerned. What is needed instead is to determine what we require to meet our unique needs (then presumably to seek the resources necessary to meet them).

Analyst Training

It was noted that some developments in analyst training in the recent past were gratifying, the Seminar on Intelligence Analysis (SIA) being cited specifically. A great deal more needs to be done in this pioneering effort, however, and the National Foreign Assessment Center (NFAC) in particular has not done nearly enough in this area as yet. Perhaps SIA is only one approach to this sort of training; there may be other and better approaches. The CSI, for example, can be important in generating forward movement in the training of analysts, especially as it focuses on professional concerns for production.

Harking back to the discussion on OTR versus component training, it was suggested that NFAC could probably do more analysis training than OTR can ever hope to do. OTR could quite possibly draw on NFAC resources, including people, if it were to undertake additional analyst training responsibilities, but perhaps NFAC might more effectively set up its own shop to train analyst personnel. It was stated in this connection that OPA now offers its own in-house course in Written Expression. Alternatively, NFAC might detail some of its officers to OTR for short periods to conduct training in OTR facilities. An NFAC representative warned that an NFAC training shop would very likely be eroded by other demands that would inevitably be placed on it. He went on to define another problem in analytical training that is already noticeable: new people entering on duty with CIA prove very well trained in the methodology of assimilating diverse information and merging it with existing data. Once on duty, however, we force them back into the more traditional forms of handling information, a process that seems of questionable benefit.

Management Training

The seminar took note of the DCI's interest in management training, but some participants questioned whether all or most of it had to be conducted within the Agency. In the past, the reasons justifying in-house management training were problems of cover, the relevancy of external courses (such as those offered at Harvard, Wharton and Stanford) and the need for live problems using classified materials. Since it is easier to get dollars than people (read qualified instructors) there is an argument to be made for more external training, if it is appropriate to Agency needs. One "sour note" sounded by another participant on using external training facilities was precisely on the issue of appropriateness; they offer different things than those needed by CIA and stress managing people as opposed to managing professionals. This presents a real difficulty: when CIA officers return from external management training, they actually want to manage!

A DO representative strongly endorsed in-house management training, asserting that the Management School was right "on target" in its instruction on interpersonal relationships. He said that current Agency management courses were

particularly helpful to young case officers who think they know how to manage subordinates just because they have been taught how to assess, cultivate and recruit clandestine assets in the Operations Course. (DO's problem with management training lies in a different area -- how to "free up" case officers long enough to attend courses.) Another DO officer warned against stressing management training at the expense of tradecraft training.

Still another participant pointed out that the emphasis currently being put on management training was coming atop other pressures -- FOIA demands, the aging and bureaucratizing of the Agency and the weakening of both operational and analytical skills -- resulting in constant calls for shuffling and balancing resources. The DTR suggested that there was yet a third way of providing management training: bringing in outside experts such as the American Management Association and the Levinson Institute. He also noted that, through the years and at various times, we have both added managerial training to and deleted it from our curriculum. At the present time, we are adding some management training to the Midcareer Course; the Senior Seminar has always included some management training. The question of the relevancy of any given management training is, of course, always with us. This phase of the conference concluded with the observation that selection of qualified candidates is the key to good management training. If, for example, the new Executive Development Program succeeds in the early spotting of people with real managerial potential, this will give management training a new dimension.

Intelligence Community Training

The DTR asked for the participants' views on IC training for the 1980s. One discussant noted that a paradox has always existed in relations -- including training relations -- between CIA and the military versus CIA and the Department of State. A DO representative suggested that the less-than-cordial State-CIA relationship had been improved somewhat in the recent past with the advent of the Ambassadors/DCMs course and the orientation given to entering-on-duty Foreign Service officers. It is the medium-grade FSO group that now needs attention. The problem is the Department's claim that it is difficult to place these officers in training. Another spokesman stressed that here again OTR might act as an "accelerated agent of change" vis-a-vis the Intelligence

Community, emphasizing what is unique about OTR's work and constantly assessing the usefulness of what it is doing. (Parenthetically, the DTR noted that CIA is reimbursed in dollars for training given to certain IC personnel, such as in operations training, but that some competition for resources nonetheless remains among the IC elements.)

Language Training

The DTR briefly outlined the new Language Incentive Awards Program and revealed that OTR is currently seeking to establish portable classrooms at Headquarters so that part time language students will not have to come all the way to the Chamber of Commerce building for training. One negative aspect of the awards program has been observed, namely, the built-in inflexibility when managers try to move people out of jobs which qualify them for language incentive awards. To the question of whether some language training might not be obtained outside the Agency the DTR responded that outside commercial training -- Berlitz, for example -- is not very good. "Supportive" external training wherein students might obtain perhaps seventy-five percent competence in outside facilities and twenty-five percent competence in internal training was suggested by one discussant as a way to stretch resources.

An NFAC and a DO analyst contrasted the language needs of their respective directorates. NFAC personnel need language training to maintain the skills they possess when they come on board with the Agency. DO officers, on the other hand, usually engage full-time language training after they come on board. One value of Agency language training, in the DO view, is that it really teaches the case officer what he will need in the field.

Individualized Training

A suggestion was made for more "outreach" and on-site individualized training in the decade of the eighties. It was stated that some elements -- particularly S&T/OTS -- simply cannot guarantee their personnel that they will be in place long enough to attend any given course. Some correspondence courses can be taken and the Self Study Center is available for Headquarters personnel, but what arrangements are there for others desiring training? There was considerable disagreement among the participants as to whether there is

or would soon be video playback units and monitors available to overseas personnel. Whatever the situation it was suggested that components begin soonest to select and identify those courses "lendable" to video instruction while OTR decides whether to offer many more courses in the eighties than in the seventies and the best method for handling an increased workload.

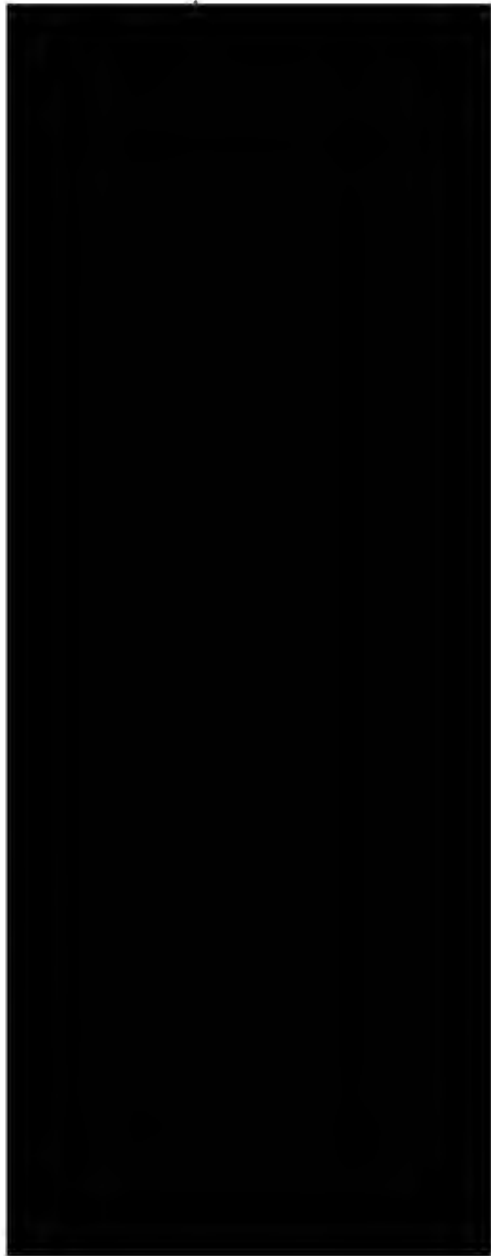
An Intelligence University?

One participant referred to the need to establish a national intelligence academy. It was stated that our KGB and GRU counterparts in the USSR are trained in three-year programs and the suggestion was made that CIA might consider a two to three year course of study for selected incoming personnel to include language, analysis, operations and the whole spectrum of concerns of the Agency. It was predicted that such a proposal would cause a "major convulsion" in senior management and the question was raised whether top managers would ever accept a program where people would not be put to productive work until several years after entry on duty. The participants labeled the idea as one "which comes up every decade" and noted that top management support would be the key to putting this proposal across.

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Participants



DD/OTR
C/P/OTR
D/OTS
D/IG
DD/OC
OTR
D/CSI/OTR
D/OCO
STO/DDO
DD/SI
DD/OT/OTR
O/Compt
OTR
NFAC Consultant
D/OTR
SA/DCI
STO/DDS&T
STO/PDA
STO/NFAC

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